

2001: A SPACE  
ODYSSEY

MARVEL COMICS GROUP



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BASED ON  
CONCEPTS FROM THE  
MGM/STANLEY KUBRICK  
PRODUCTION

BEGIN A NEW JOURNEY TO THE STARS-AND BEYOND!!

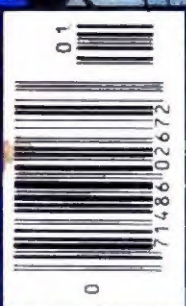
# 2001!

## A SPACE ODYSSEY

**SECOND  
STARTLING  
ISSUE!**



A FIERY FEMALE  
MAKES THE  
CENTURIES' TRIP--  
FROM THE CAVES  
TO ETERNITY!  
**VIRA, THE  
SHE  
DEMON!**





STAN LEE PRESENTS:

# 2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY™

BASED ON CONCEPTS OF THE MGM MOVIE BY STANLEY KUBRICK AND ARTHUR C. CLARKE

EDITED, WRITTEN AND DRAWN BY: **JACK KIRBY** | INKED AND LETTERED BY: **MIKE ROYER** | CONSULTING ARCHIE EDITOR: **GOODWIN**

ARE WE THE END OF THE LINE!? ARE WE THE LAST STOP IN THE JOURNEY OF HUMAN EVOLUTION? THE ANSWER COULD BE THAT THE VOYAGE IS FAR FROM OVER!! EACH OF US COULD BE A STEPPING STONE TO THE NEW SEED!!! BUT, LET US NOT LEAP TO THE FUTURE BEFORE WE EXPLORE THE DIM. PAST-- FOR ONE WHO BEGAN HER ODYSSEY IN A CAVE OF SKULLS!

# VIRA

## THE SHE-DEMON!

COLOR BY:  
**JANICE COHEN**

THIS IS THE MONOLITH!  
IS IT AN  
ALIEN  
INTELLIGENCE  
OR AN  
ENTRY TO  
THE STARS!?

BEGONE,  
YOU HUNTERS  
OF VERMIN!  
BEGONE!



VIRA IS A NON-SUBMISSIVE FEMALE WHO IS TRYING TO SURVIVE IN A PRIMITIVE WORLD SWARMING WITH MALES WHO DOMINATE OR KILL!! HAVING WANDERED INTO A "RITUAL CAVE," RESERVED FOR THE STORAGE OF ENEMY SKULLS SHE FINDS HERSELF SURPRISED BY TRIBAL WARRIORS RETURNING FROM THE HUNT!!

I SEEK ONLY FOOD HERE!!

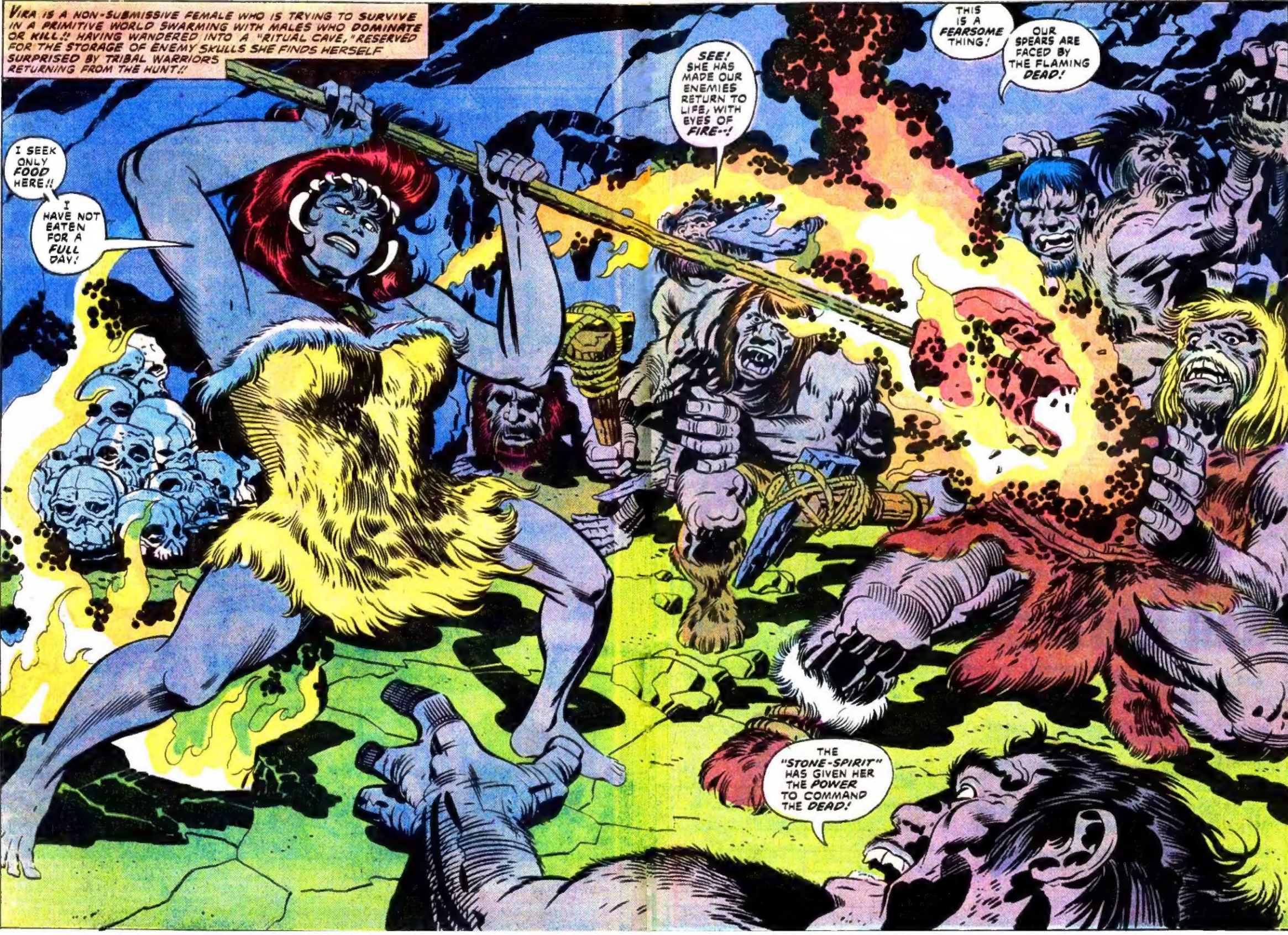
I HAVE NOT EATEN FOR A FULL DAY!

SEE! SHE HAS MADE OUR ENEMIES RETURN TO LIFE, WITH EYES OF FIRE!!

THIS IS A FEARSOME THING!

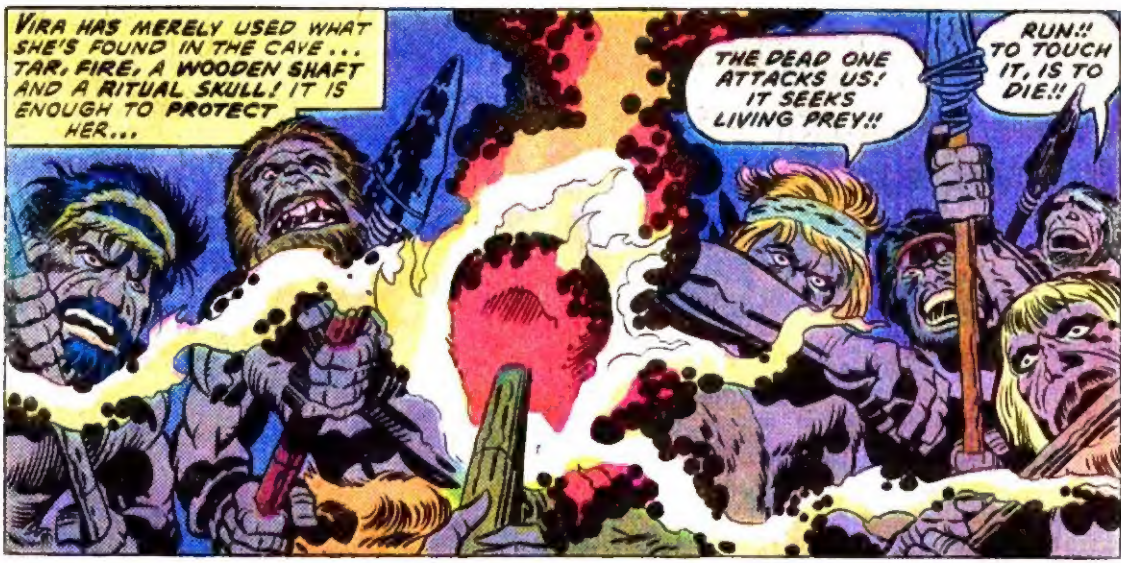
OUR SPEARS ARE FACED BY THE FLAMING DEAD!

THE "STONE-SPIRIT" HAS GIVEN HER THE POWER TO COMMAND THE DEAD!





VIRA HAS MERELY USED WHAT SHE'S FOUND IN THE CAVE... TAR, FIRE, A WOODEN SHAFT AND A RITUAL SKULL! IT IS ENOUGH TO PROTECT HER...



THE DEAD ONE ATTACKS US! IT SEEKS LIVING PREY!!

RUN!! TO TOUCH IT, IS TO DIE!!

RUDIMENTARY RELIGION HAS COME TO MEN! THE FEAR OF THE UNKNOWN IS ALIVE IN THEIR HEARTS! THE BLAZING SKULL WHICH MOVES IN UNISON TO VIRA'S SCREAMS SHATTERS THEIR SENSE OF LOGIC-- AND THEIR NERVES!!



THEY BREAK! THEY FLEE IN TERROR! THE MALES STUMBLE AND FALL BEFORE A FIREY IMAGE CONJURED UP BY A RESOURCEFUL FEMALE.



MOMENTS LATER, VIRA CAUTIOUSLY LEAVES THE "RITUAL CAVE," KNOWING THAT SHE MUST MAKE THE MOST OF HER TIME BEFORE THE HUNTERS RECOVER THEIR SENSES...



I-I CANNOT STAY... THEY WILL KILL ME!

SHE MUST DISCOURAGE PURSUIT. SHE MUST GO TO THE PLACES THE TRIBE FEARS. VIRA DECIDES TO CLIMB THE "FIRE" MOUNTAIN...



THEY WILL NEVER FOLLOW ME UP THERE--



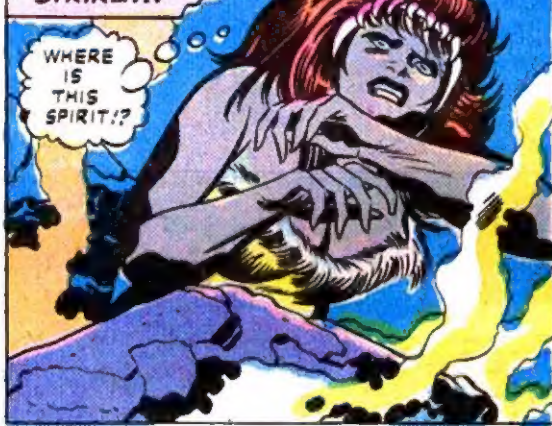
WHAT IS TO BECOME ITALY IN THE FAR FUTURE IS LITERALLY A LAND OF FIRE. VOLCANOS ARE CONSTANTLY ACTIVE AND FLASH CRIMSON IN THE NIGHT...



MORE THAN GIVING MAN THE GIFT OF FIRE, THIS VOLCANO HAS ALSO MADE HIM FEAR AND DREAM STRANGE VISIONS...



EVEN VIRA'S STUBBORN COURAGE BEGINS TO FALTER... SHE PAUSES BEHIND EVERY STEAMING ROCK--WAITING FOR THE UNKNOWN TO STRIKE...

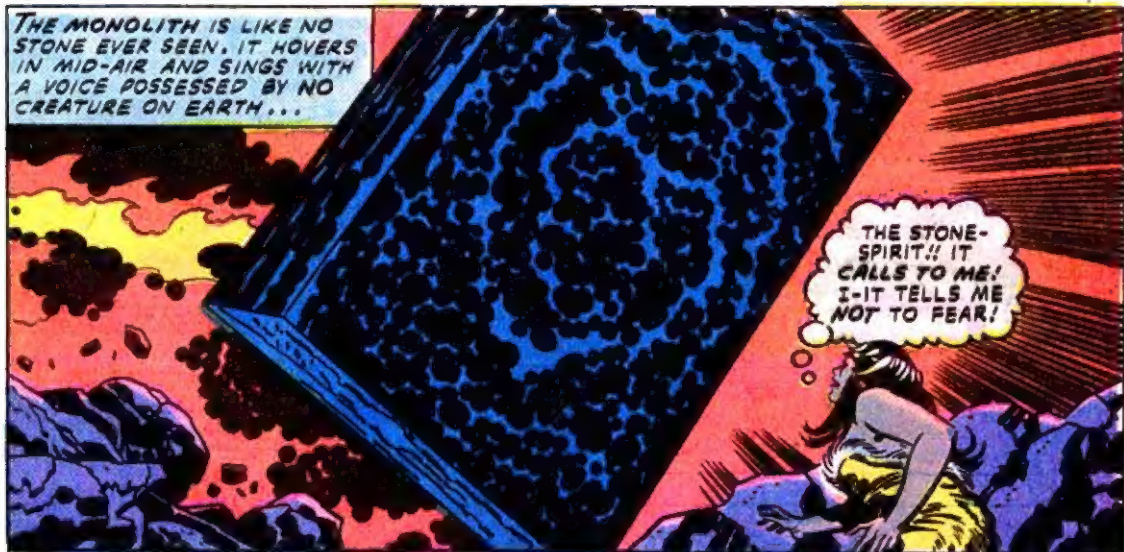


WHERE IS THIS STONE-SPIRIT? IS IT REAL OR ONLY A BOASTFUL HUNTER'S TALE??

VIRA SEEKS--  
AND FINDS!



THE MONOLITH IS LIKE NO STONE EVER SEEN. IT HOVERS IN MID-AIR AND SINGS WITH A VOICE POSSESSED BY NO CREATURE ON EARTH...





BUT VIRIA'S FEARS DO NOT ONLY STEM FROM SUPERSTITION... SHE FACES DEATH FROM STARVATION OR SOME HUNTER'S SPEAR...



SHE TELLS THIS TO THE STONE-SPIRIT. SHE TELLS OF AN EMPTY BELLY WHICH CANNOT BE FILLED BY THIS BARREN GROUND... FOR NOTHING GROWS HERE, NOTHING CAN SURVIVE IN THESE HEIGHTS!



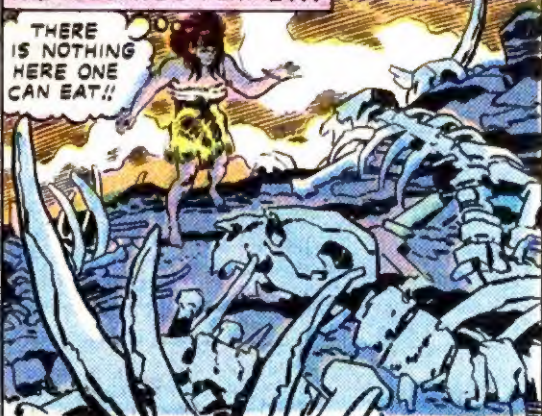
TELL ME, STONE-SPIRIT!  
I-I NEED FOOD... I NEED  
WATER... I MUST HAVE  
THESE--OR I DIE...

THERE IS NO ONE ABOUT TO HEAR WHAT TRANSPIRES. THE MONOLITH SOON CEASES ITS SOUNDS AND VIRIA GOES ON...



IT HAS  
SPOKEN! WHAT  
LIES EVERYWHERE  
IN THIS PLACE  
CAN SAVE  
ME...

VIRIA LOOKS IN ALL DIRECTIONS AND SEES NOTHING BUT ASHY SOIL AND THE BONES OF ANIMALS WHO HAD ALSO MADE THEIR CHOICE BETWEEN THE HUNTERS' SPEARS AND THE VOLCANO'S FLAME...



THERE  
IS NOTHING  
HERE ONE  
CAN EAT!!

VIRIA'S FERTILE MIND IS EVER RESTLESS. SHE SCOURS THE GRIM FIELD AND REFLECTS UPON ITS GROTESQUE HARVEST... THERE IS SOIL AND BONES HERE... AND SOMETHING --ELSE!!



FEAR!

THIS IS  
TRULY A  
PLACE OF  
FEAR!!



VIRIA IS SUDDENLY  
INSPIRED! SHE WILL  
USE THE BONES AND  
SOIL-- AND FEAR  
ITSELF, TO PRODUCE  
HER NEEDS!!



LATER THAT NIGHT, FIRES BLAZE AND HUNTERS DANCE AT THE FOOT OF THE "FIRE-MOUNTAIN," HOME OF THE STONE-SPIRIT--WHO CAN ONLY BE APPEASED BY THE SKULLS OF ENEMIES...



THE DANCERS FREEZE IN THEIR TRACKS AS A LOUD, UNEARTHLY SHRIEK RIPS THROUGH THE NIGHT AIR!!

**IIIIIEEEYYA!**

LOOK THERE!  
WHAT IS IT!!?

I-I HAVE NEVER  
SEEN ITS LIKE!



WHAT FACES THEM IS TERRIBLE TO BEHOLD! THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT THIS IS A SHE-DEMON, A LIVING EMBODIMENT OF THE FIRE-MOUNTAIN ITSELF!!

DROP YOUR  
SPEARS AND  
BOW BEFORE  
ME!!



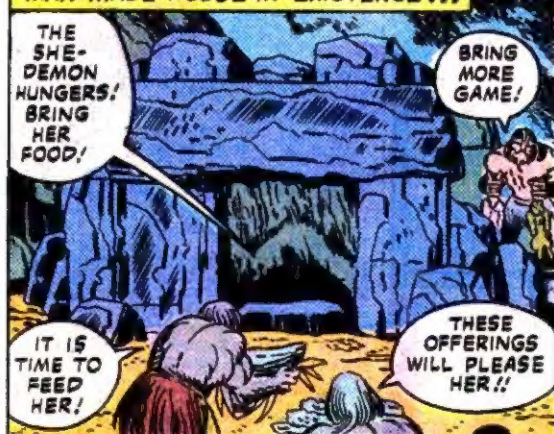
VIRA HIDES HER AMAZEMENT AS THEY OBEY!! HER EYES CONTINUE TO FLASH AND HER EERIE VOICE IS STEADY AND COMMANDING...

I AM SENT BY THE GREAT STONE SPIRIT TO LIVE AMONG YOU!! PLEASE ME AND YOU SHALL PROSPER! ANGER ME-- AND I SHALL DEVOUR YOUR TRIBE!!





**THE RUSE WORKS FOR VIRA. THE TRIBE OF SAVAGE HUNTERS BECOMES HER'S TO RULE! THEY LABOR WITH GREAT ROCKS TO BUILD HER AN EDIFICE... PERHAPS IT IS THE FIRST MAN-MADE HOUSE IN EXISTENCE...**



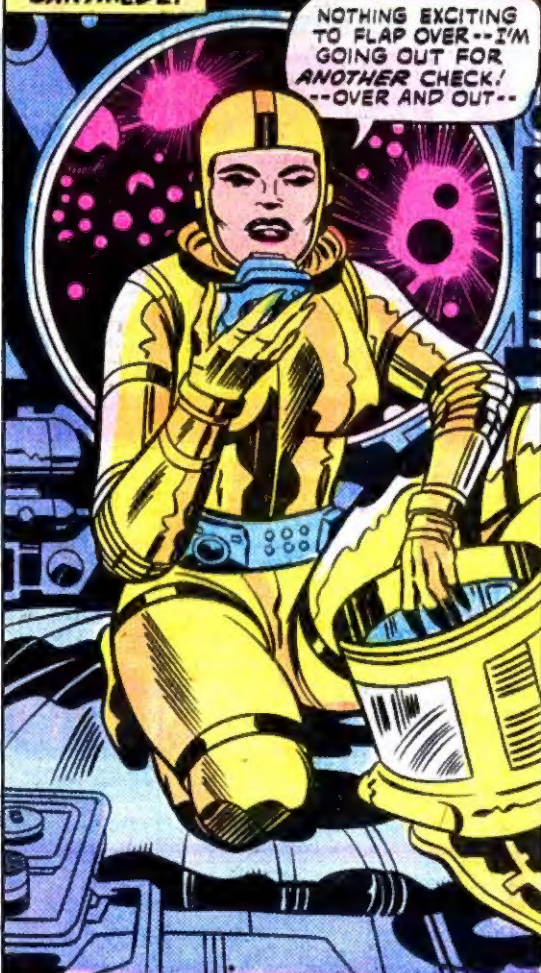
**STRANGELY ENOUGH, THEIR FEAR-INSPIRED BELIEF HAS GENERATED COURAGE AMONG THE HUNTERS. THEY TRIUMPH. THEY PROSPER. --IN THE NAME OF THEIR ADOPTED DEMON-GODDESS...**



**VIRA HAS FOUND THE SECURITY THAT SHE SO DESPERATELY SOUGHT. CLAD IN BONES AND SMEARED WITH SOIL, SHE WILL RULE BY FEAR AND LAUNCH HUMANITY ON THE ROAD TO UNITY BY GOVERNMENT. HER KIND WILL BE FOLLOWED BY KINGS AND CONGRESSES FOR AGES TO COME!!**



**THE AGES PASS!-- AND HUMANITY'S VENTURE INTO SPACE FINDS WOMEN ACTIVE ON THE DARK FRONTIER! VERA GENTRY, OF EXPLORER UNIT 5, REPORTS TO HER ORBITING SHIP FROM THE SURFACE OF GANYMEDE!**





GANYMEDE IS ONE OF JUPITER'S LARGER MOONS--AND STRANGE, INTRIGUING SIGHTINGS HAVE LED UNIT 5 TO DROP AN ASTRONAUT ON ITS BARREN SURFACE. THUS, VERA GENTRY LEAVES HER SURVIVAL HUT TO MAKE HER PERIODIC SWEEP OF THE HORIZON.

NASA MUST BE RECRUITING MALE-CHAUVINIST STAFFERS. THEY WOULD PICK A FEMALE FOR THIS U.F.O. ASSIGNMENT!

OH, WELL. ANYTHING FOR A BARREL OF LAUGHS...

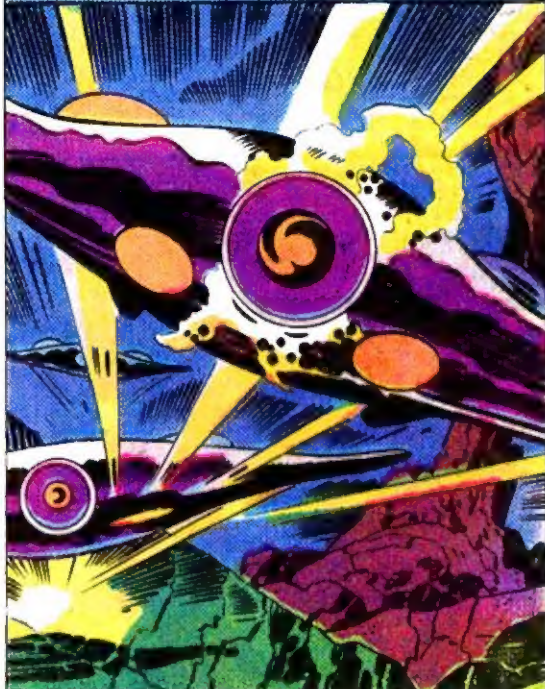


THERE HAVE BEEN FOTOS OF FLEETING SHADOWS--LONG AND LEAN--SILHOUETTES AGAINST THE GROUND, WHERE NO SHIP FROM EARTH HAD EVER LANDED. VERA GENTRY ACTIVATES HER TELESCOPE AND PROBES THE EMPTY VASTNESS...

THE OLD U.F.O. STORIES NEVER SEEM TO FADE... ALIEN INTELLIGENCES ARE STILL THE "IN" THING BACK HOME...



SUDDENLY, THEY ARE THERE!--SOLID AND DETAILED AND SOMEHOW SINISTER IN FLIGHT. VERA GASPS FOR BREATH! THE ALIENS MAY BE MILES AWAY, BUT THEY ARE UNNERVINGLY FAST. THEY COULD BE UPON HER IN MOMENTS!!





VERA BOLTS FROM THE TELESCOPE AND RACES FOR THE HUT. THE ALIENS ARE ALREADY IN SIGHT-- AND, THE URGENCY TO REPORT THIS HAS TURNED INTO A PANIC SITUATION...

GOT TO MAKE IT BEFORE THEY SPOT ME!



THEN--!

BLOWN!



GOOD LORD! THEY'VE DESTROYED THE SURVIVAL HUT AND ALL ITS EQUIPMENT IN A MATTER OF SECONDS!

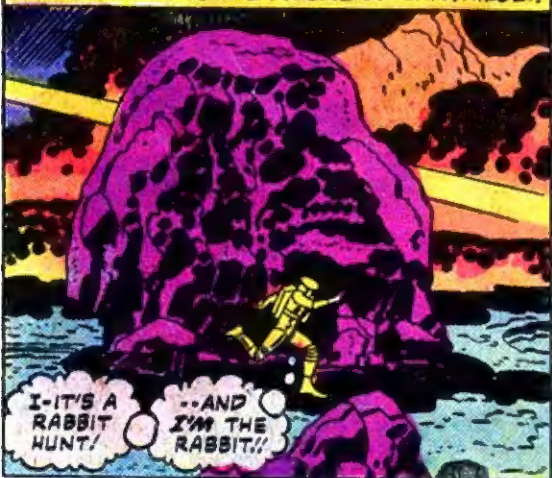
I'M ON MY OWN--!!



BLAST FOLLOWS BLAST!! VERA FINDS HERSELF THE NEXT TARGET FOR DESTRUCTION...



THE ALIENS ARE RELENTLESS IN THEIR EFFORTS! FLAMING DEATH REACHES OUT FOR VERA AMONG THE ROCKS OF GANYMEDE!!



I-IT'S A RABBIT HUNT!

--AND I'M THE RABBIT!!

SO, THIS IS THE MOMENT WE'VE WAITED FOR!!-- CONTACT WITH ALIEN BEINGS! BUT, WE MAY BE SORRY THAT WE RAN INTO THIS BUNCH!!

THEY'RE A HOSTILE, DEADLY CROWD!





VERA SUDDENLY WHEELS IN FRIGHT! SHE HAS DETECTED MOVEMENT IN THE ROCKS ABOVE HER. FOR A SPLIT-SECOND, THE LIGHT OF JUPITER ILLUMINATES A FACE WHICH CARRIES A DARK MESSAGE FROM THE STARS!

AAAAAA!!  
I-IT'S HORRIBLE!  
HORRIBLE!

WITH POUNDING HEART, VERA FLEES DOWN THE ROCKY TRENCH AS DEATH BARKS AT HER HEELS!!

SHE SEARCHES WILDLY FOR ANY AVENUE OF ESCAPE. EVERY CRACK AND CREVASSE BECOMES A BECKONING HAVEN FROM THE ATTACK...

THIS LOOKS PROMISING! I'VE GOT NO CHOICE BUT TO FOLLOW IT THROUGH!

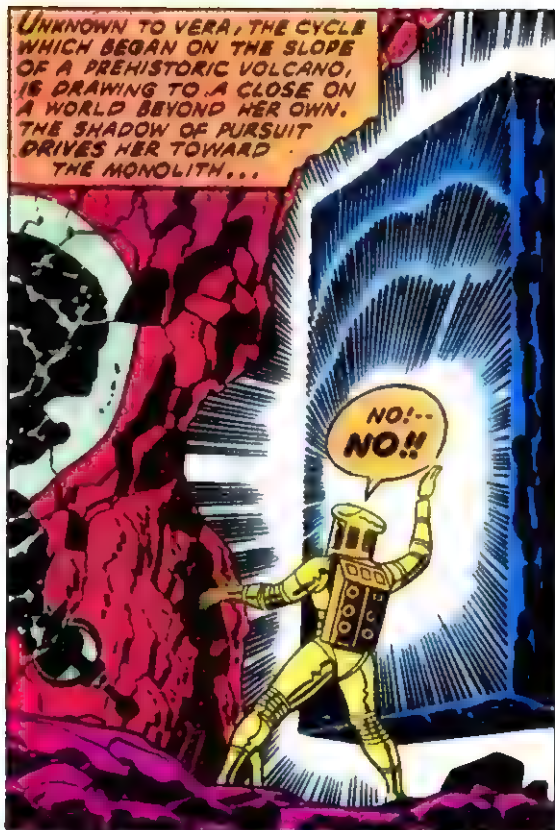
THE OPENING IS SMALL, BUT IT WIDENS STEADILY AS VERA CLAWS HER WAY INTO ITS BLACK DEPTHS! BEHIND HER, SHE CAN HEAR THE ALIENS PAUSE AT THE ENTRANCE...

VERA IS IN THE GRIP OF TERROR WHEN SHE BREAKS INTO A LARGE CAVERN. ONLY THE SIGHT OF THE MONOLITH CAUSES HER TO HALT--IT IS A FANTASTIC, ALMOST MESMERIZING SIGHT...

GREAT HEAVENS! W-WHAT'S THAT!?



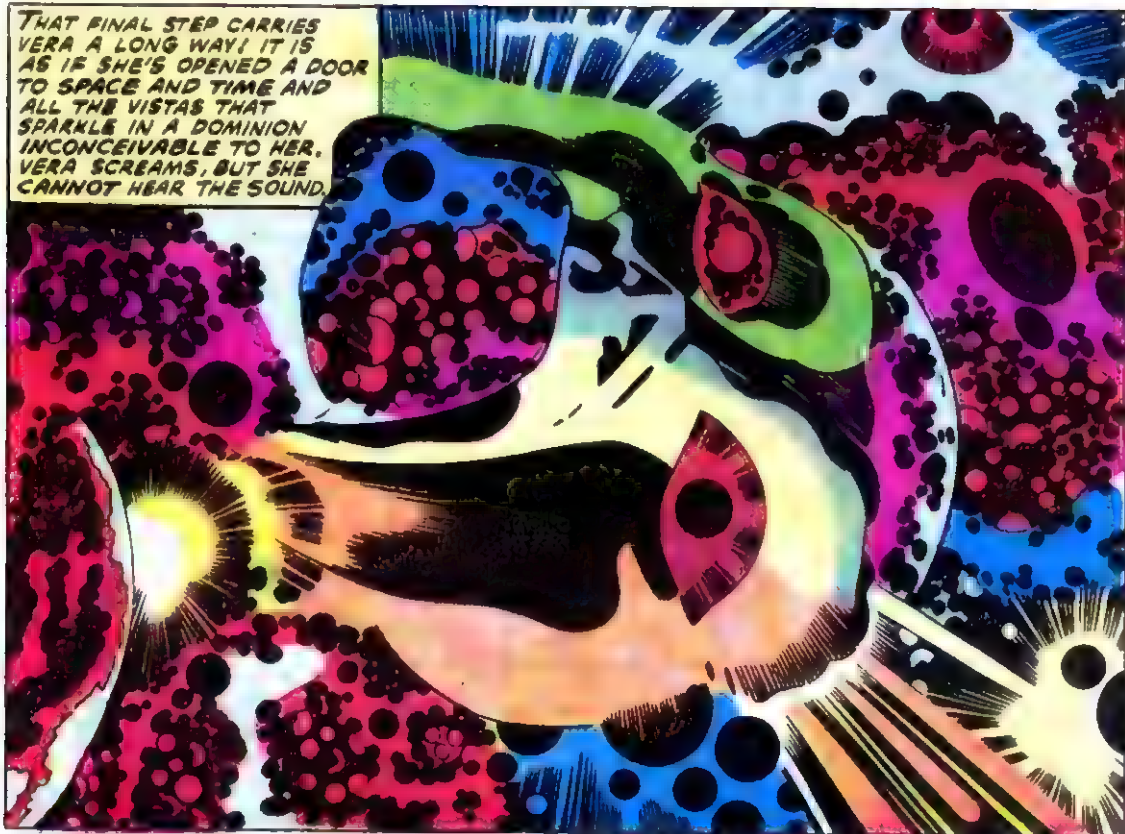
UNKNOWN TO VERA, THE CYCLE WHICH BEGAN ON THE SLOPE OF A PREHISTORIC VOLCANO, IS DRAWING TO A CLOSE ON A WORLD BEYOND HER OWN. THE SHADOW OF PURSUIT DRIVES HER TOWARD THE MONOLITH...



ESCAPE SEEMS IMPOSSIBLE NOW. VERA TAKES A BACKWARD STEP, REALIZING THAT THERE IS NO LONGER ROOM FOR RETREAT!-- BUT, SHE IS WRONG!!

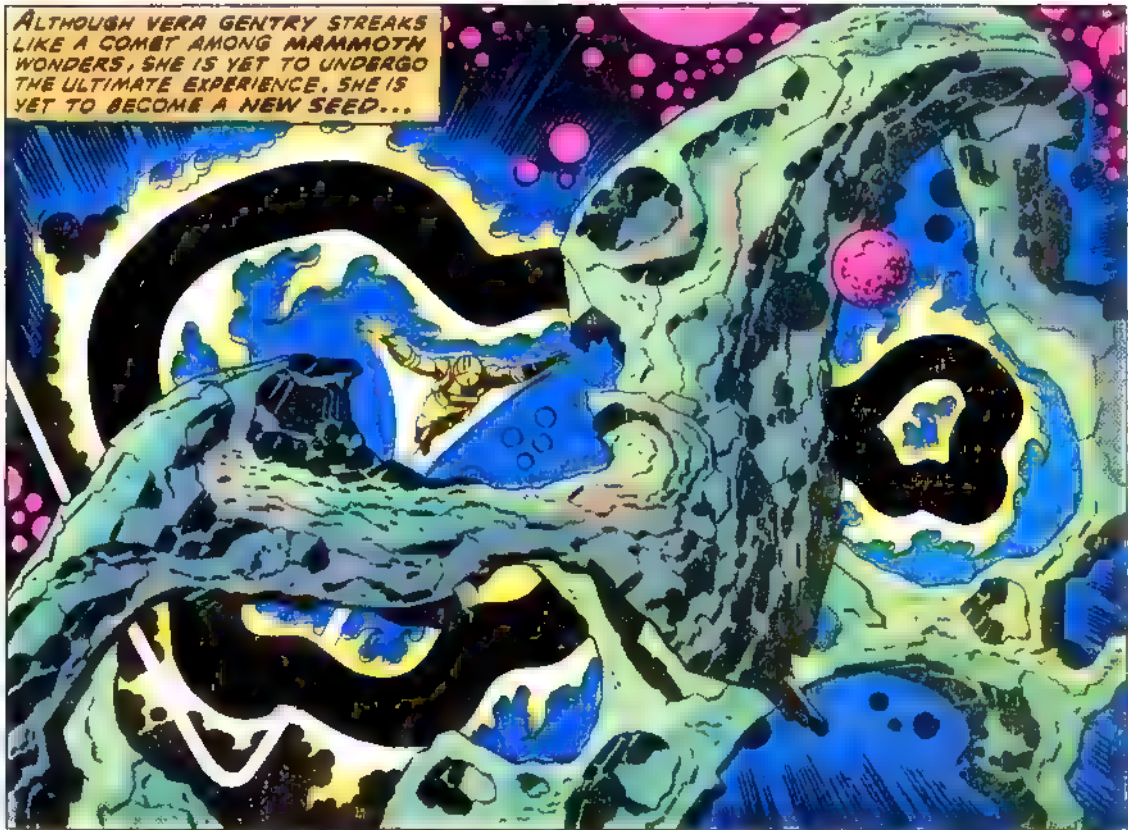


THAT FINAL STEP CARRIES VERA A LONG WAY! IT IS AS IF SHE'S OPENED A DOOR TO SPACE AND TIME AND ALL THE VISTAS THAT SPARKLE IN A DOMINION INCONCEIVABLE TO HER. VERA SCREAMS, BUT SHE CANNOT HEAR THE SOUND.

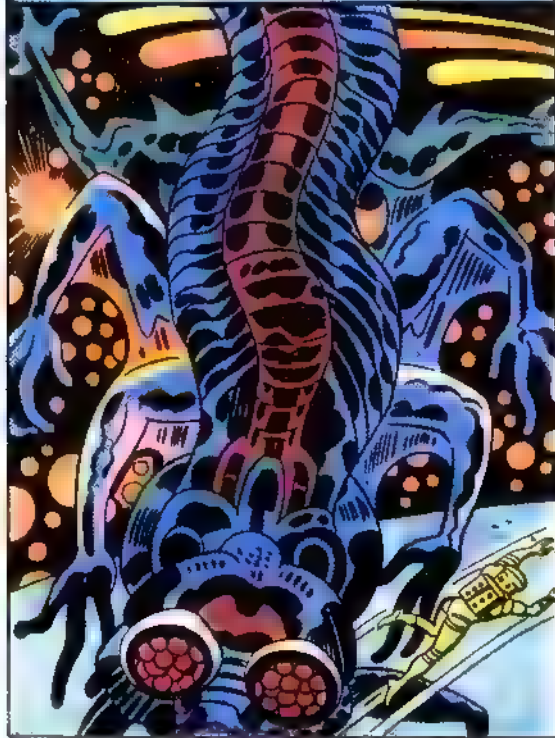




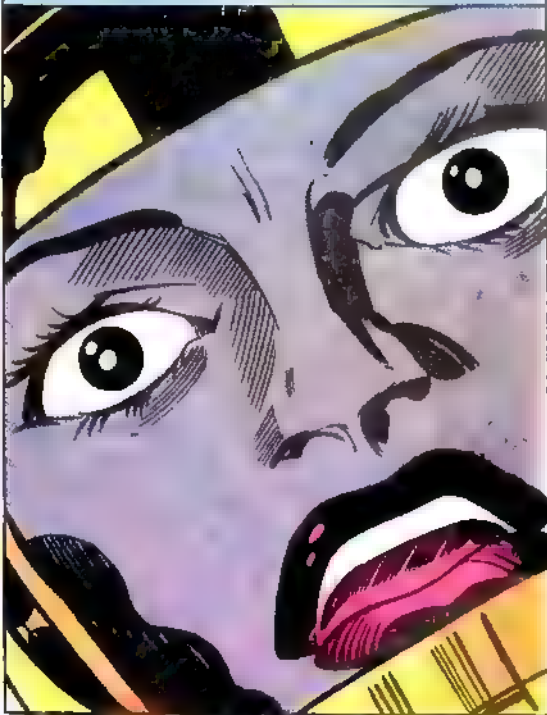
ALTHOUGH VERA GENTRY STREAKS LIKE A COMET AMONG MAMMOTH WONDERS, SHE IS YET TO UNDERGO THE ULTIMATE EXPERIENCE. SHE IS YET TO BECOME A NEW SEED...



SHE IS A TINY MOTE IN A FIRMAMENT OF WHEELING UNIVERSES... THERE ARE GIANT THINGS THAT LIVE AND MOVE FROM GALAXY TO GALAXY...



THERE IS THAT AND MORE!--TOO MUCH FOR THE HUMAN MIND TO HOLD AND ABSORB... AND, AS IT CONTINUES, VERA FREEZES IN SHOCK--GAZING AT THE INDESCRIBABLE WITH FIXED AND IMMOBILE FEATURES...





**SUDDENLY, SHE FINDS HERSELF PLUNGED INTO WATER--CLEAR AND AZURE BLUE...**



**VERA DRIFTS LAZILY IN ITS DEPTHS. THERE IS A COMFORTING FAMILIARITY IN THE TILED WALLS SURROUNDING HER...**



**INSTINCT TAKES OVER AS SHE BEGINS TO SWIM. VERA'S SPACESUIT HAS BEEN REPLACED BY A BATHING SUIT-- ONE SHE HAS OFTEN WORN IN THIS POOL...**



**VERA BOBS TO THE SURFACE, REFRESHED AND EXHILARATED BY A REALITY WHICH HAD ONCE SEEMED LIKE SOME LONG-FORGOTTEN DREAM...**



**IT IS ALL THERE, AS SHE HAD ONCE KNOWN IT-- THE POOL-SIDE AND ITS POTTED PLANTS...**

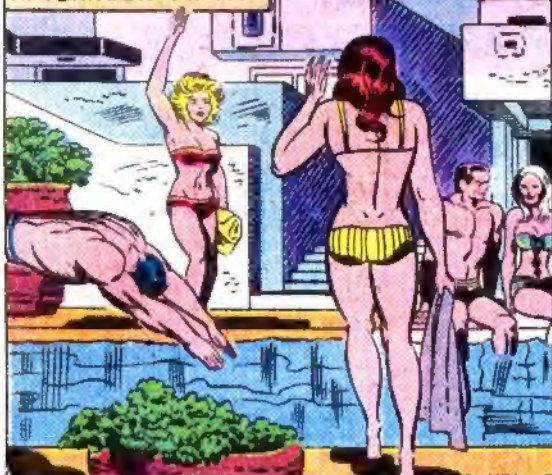


**THE CONDOMINIUM SHE HAD LIVED IN-- IT STANDS AS IT ALWAYS HAS: SOFT WHITE AGAINST A BLUE CALIFORNIA SKY...**





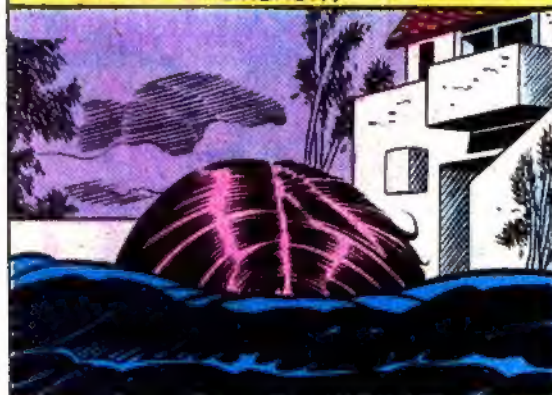
VERA IS HOME. SHE WAVES TO HER NEIGHBORS, WHO'VE COME FOR THEIR AFTERNOON DIP...



THE SUN IS WARM UPON THE Languorous FLESH. LIGHT CONVERSATION DRIPTS ABOUT HER UNTIL IT BLENDS WITH THE AIR AND BECOMES A SOURCE OF SOLACE WITHIN A BRAIN NUMBED BY FATIGUE. VERA SLEEPS...



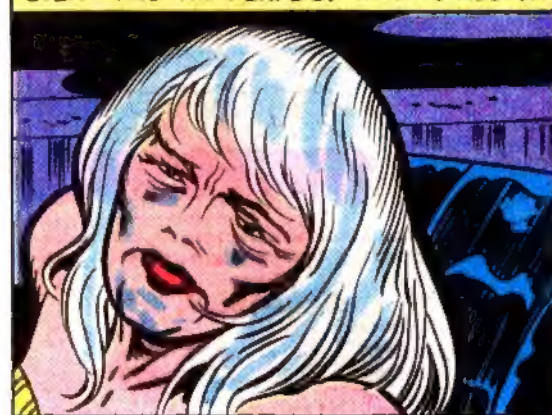
IN THE ENVIRONMENT PREPARED FOR HER BY THE MONOLITH, THE HUMAN SUBJECT EASES INTO THE CHANGE. IT IS AN ALIEN DESIGN, COMPUTED BY AN INTELLIGENCE THAT DEFIES ALL EARTHLY NOTIONS...



VERA GENTRY IS AGING RAPIDLY. SHE HAS ALREADY REACHED THE AGE OF FIFTY AS HER EYES FLUTTER BEFORE THEY OPEN...



SHE IS SEVENTY AND TOO WEARY TO RISE WHEN SHE AWAKENS. IT FEELS SO MUCH BETTER TO SETTLE BACK AND DOZE OFF AGAIN BENEATH THE COMFORTING SUN. AFTER ALL, THE AFTERNOON IS FAR FROM OVER -- AND THE PERFECT TIME TO REST...

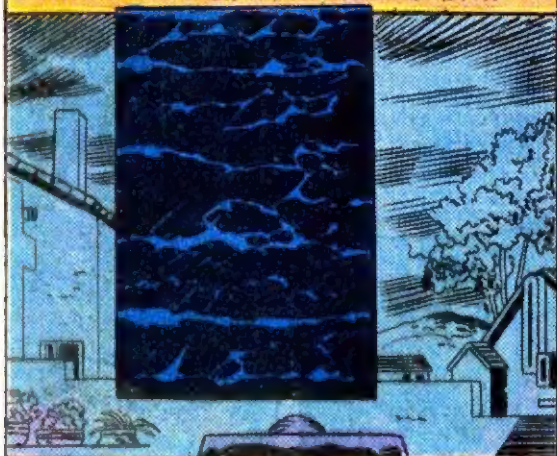


AT THE CLOSE OF NINETY MINUTES, VERA GENTRY HAS LIVED OUT HER LIFE SPAN... SHE IS NEVER TO AWAKEN, AGAIN... AT LEAST, NOT AS VERA GENTRY...





THE ENVIRONMENT GROWS STRANGELY SILENT. IT IS AN EMPTY STAGE, WHOSE ACTORS HAVE VANISHED INTO THE WINGS. ONLY THE MONOLITH HAS ANY VALIDITY AT THIS MOMENT.



IT APPEARS AND FLASHES WITH A BLINDING BRILLIANCE, THE PLAY OF SHIFTING ATOMS CREATES THE HUM THAT HERALDS THE TRANSFORMATION OF VERA GENTRY...



HER 102 YEAR OLD BODY IS SOON COVERED BY A FINE ATOMIC FILM WHICH GROWS MORE OPAQUE AS THE ACTIVITY QUICKENS...



THERE IS NOT MUCH TO SEE BENEATH THE FILM AT THE HEIGHT OF THE CHANGE. IT IS A PROCESS BEYOND THE UNDERSTANDING OF MODERN MAN...



VERA GENTRY EXISTS NO MORE. BUT PART OF HER SURVIVES IN THE EMERGING LIFE, CALLED THE NEW SEED. IT LIES ALMOST FULLY FORMED AS THE CHANGE GOES ON...



THEN IT IS OVER. WHAT LIES BENEATH THE FILM IS BUT ANOTHER LINK IN THE HUMAN CHAIN OF DESTINY--FORGED BY AN ALIEN WILL--FOR REASONS KNOWN ONLY TO ITSELF!!





THE ENVIRONMENT FADES AWAY LIKE AN OUTWORN FANTASY...THE NEW SEED DRIFTS IN AN ELEMENT IT WAS MEANT FOR--THE UNIVERSE!!



IN THESE ENDLESS REGIONS IT WILL DO THE THINGS THAT WILL FULFILL ITS EXISTENCE. IN EVERY DIRECTION LIES MEANING AND MISSION...



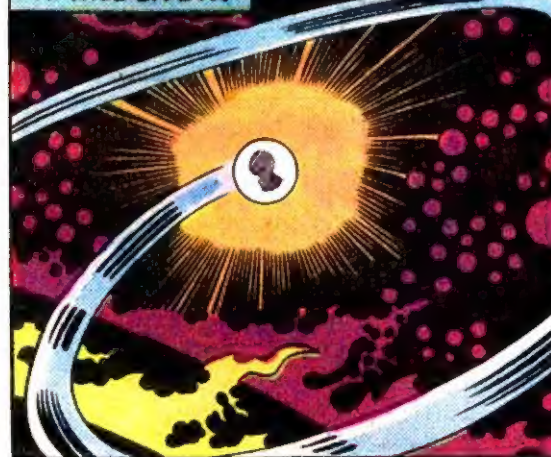
BEFORE DEPARTING ON ITS LIFELONG JOURNEY, THE NEW SEED SUBJECTS ITS IMMEDIATE SURROUNDINGS TO A FINAL, PENETRATING SCRUTINY...



IT IS A MOMENT OF ORIENTATION. LARGE, KNOWING EYES ENCOMPASS ALL THERE IS TO SEE. THEY QUICKLY DEFINE ITS FIXED POINT IN THE VAST DESIGN OF THE FIRMAMENT... THEN, THERE IS NO LONGER ANY NEED TO LINGER...



THE NEW SEED DEPARTS WITH THE SPEED OF LIGHT. IT KNOWS ITS PURPOSE AND ITS DESTINATION--BUT, ABOVE ALL, IT KNOWS IT WILL LIVE...



**COMING NEXT!!--**

**A BONE-CRUSHING, RIB-CRACKING, HEAD-TWISTING TWO-PART LOOK AT THE NEXT CANDIDATE FOR THE NEW SEED!**

**THE BARBARIAN'S BARBARIAN!!**

**NARAK**